

4.5.2 80th Avenue SE Configuration

The open space on 80th Avenue SE that would be used under this configuration provides cohesion between the north and south sides of I-90, along with other nearby overpasses and lids. Currently the overpass provides a visual connection between the north and south sides of I-90 through the use of landscaping and the trail provides a transportation connection between the sides for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Compared to the FEIS Configuration, the 80th Avenue SE Configuration would remove additional landscaping, including shrubs and trees, some of which are within low rectangular concrete planters that would also be removed along the western half of the overpass. These planted areas would be replaced with transit lanes, landscaping, and sidewalks for buses and passenger movement to the Mercer Island Station, the park-and-ride, and the Mercer Island Town Center. The configuration would also remove the raised earthen mound with a circular planter and sculpture at the northwest corner of the intersection of 80th Avenue SE and SE 27th Street at the south end of the site.

Exhibits 4-6 through 4-9 illustrate the changes. The areas where landscaping and a group of trees next to the sculpture would be removed are adjacent to 80th Avenue SE, SE 27th Street, and N Mercer Way. Pedestrian use of the overpass would remain on the western side of the overpass by the light rail station entrance. New raised areas would be used to separate the bus travel lanes from roadway traffic and result in a change from the existing conditions. These areas would be landscaped with low shrubs to restore the visual connection with the landscaping on either side of the overpass to the extent possible.

The changes to the 80th Avenue SE I-90 overpass would be visible to people traveling on the overpass and to people viewing the area from nearby. The visual character of the overpass with the 80th Avenue SE configuration would be less landscaped than some of the other I-90 overpasses on Mercer Island. This would result in a noticeable change in the visual character due to the landscape removal and additional paved areas. However, the overall medium visual category identified for the area in the Final EIS would not change because the configuration would be consistent with the transportation-oriented character of the nearby park-ride-rider facility, I-90, and the station entrance. The replacement landscaping would continue to provide visual cohesion consistent with the current landscaping located on both sides of the overpass. The sculpture would be relocated in consultation with the City.

There are street lights along 80th Avenue SE and there may be a need for additional street lights, which would direct light downward. Additional street lights would be consistent with the urban and transportation character of this area. The landscaped areas and site furniture, such as street lights, would be designed in consultation with Mercer Island, King County, and WSDOT.

Buses would stop or lay over along 80th Avenue SE, providing direct access to the Mercer Island Station. Buses would also be able to lay over on the south side of N Mercer Way. The number of buses would be the same as described under the 77th Avenue SE Configuration.



Exhibit 4-6. Existing Condition within Outdoor Sculpture Gallery - Looking Southeast from Trail



Exhibit 4-7. Simulation of 80th Avenue SE Configuration – Looking Southeast from Trail



Exhibit 4-8. Existing Condition at Intersection of 80th Avenue SE and SE 27th Street – Looking Northwest from Sidewalk



Exhibit 4-9. Simulation of 80th Avenue SE Configuration – Looking Northwest from Sidewalk

Buses laying over on 80th Avenue SE would be a change from the FEIS Configuration but would not be a substantial difference, because a high number of buses already travel on this arterial and would stop on 80th Avenue SE under the FEIS Configuration.

4.5.3 Comparison to the Final EIS

The Final EIS found that the Mercer Island light rail station, associated improvements, and buses were consistent with the visual character of the area and no visual impacts were identified. For the 70th Avenue SE and 80th Ave SE Transit Integration configurations, changes to the bus activity, roadway network, transit lanes, and landscaping would affect the visual character, particularly for the 80th Avenue SE Configuration, but they do not result in substantial visual impacts and are within the range of potential visual impacts evaluated in the Final EIS.

4.6 Public Services

This section addresses the potential changes in crime rates and response times for emergency vehicles resulting from the Mercer Island Bus Transit Integration configurations. As described in the Final EIS, the potential for crime reflects the level of crime in the surrounding community. Mercer Island has a low crime rate, which would be expected to continue with the implementation of the Transit Integration configurations. The Final EIS also describes how the design of the station incorporates elements of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to discourage crime in and around the station. Sound Transit operates its own security force at its facilities. This includes Sound Transit's contracted security personnel and/or contracted law enforcement officers that function as transit police. Security personnel are stationed at some facilities throughout the day, and some roam and patrol transit facilities and respond to incidents in coordination with local law enforcement. The City of Mercer Island also has a police station located about 1.25 miles to the east of the station.

4.6.1 77th Avenue SE Configuration

The number of pedestrians crossing N Mercer Way during the PM peak hour would be about 1,300, an increase of about 1,050 over existing conditions, the FEIS Configuration, and the 80th Avenue SE Configuration (see pedestrian safety analysis in Section 3.6, Non-motorized). This would not affect emergency vehicle access between N Mercer Way and SE 27th Street on 80th Avenue SE or emergency access to the station, because vehicle access would be maintained on the roadways. Measures related to CPTED have been incorporated into station design to discourage crime, and the increase in the number of people in the station area is not anticipated to result in any changes to the crime rate in the surrounding area.

4.6.2 80th Avenue SE Configuration

The 80th Avenue SE Configuration would allow for transfer of bus passengers between buses and light rail without crossing public roadways, and the number of pedestrians crossing N Mercer Way is forecast to be 250, the same as existing conditions and the FEIS Configuration, and would not affect emergency vehicle access between N Mercer Way and SE 27th Street on 80th Avenue SE. CPTED elements would be incorporated into station design and emergency access to the station would not be

affected. The increase in the number of people in the station area is not anticipated to result in any changes to the crime rate in the surrounding area.

4.6.3 Comparison to the Final EIS

As with the FEIS Configuration, there would be no change in crime or impacts on emergency services for any of the Transit Integration configurations.

4.7 Parklands and Open Space/Section 4(f)

The FEIS Configuration resulted in a 0.1-acre impact to Aubrey Davis Park (formerly known as Mercer Island Park on the Lid) including impacts to sidewalks and landscaping. The Final EIS also evaluated a design option (not pursued) that included a station entrance in the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery that would have resulted in a 0.3-acre impact. With the design option, the FEIS Configuration resulted in a 0.4-acre impact to Aubrey Davis Park.

Aubrey Davis Park is located within WSDOT right-of-way, but is leased to and maintained by the City of Mercer Island. Sound Transit consulted with WSDOT regarding the applicability of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act on parks and open space including portions of Aubrey Davis Park and the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery, and WSDOT determined that Section 4(f) does not apply to WSDOT-owned properties leased to local cities for use as parks/open space (refer to Appendix E, WSDOT Section 4(f) Memorandum). Therefore, there are no changes from the original Section 4(f) findings.

4.7.1 77th Avenue SE Configuration

The 77th Avenue SE Configuration would not affect parks or open space areas. During construction, however, the Mountains to Sound/I-90 Trail would be rerouted temporarily around the construction area. Short-term closures may also be needed. Sound Transit would provide advance notification to the community and would provide signed detours. Sound Transit would restore impacted landscaped areas and the trail following construction.

4.7.2 80th Avenue SE Configuration

The 80th Avenue SE Configuration would affect about 0.7 acre of landscaped strips within Aubrey Davis Park as a result of the modifications to accommodate the 80th Avenue SE Configuration. The new bus stops, transit lane, and turnaround would impact the landscaped mound containing a sculpture at the east side of the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery. Sound Transit would relocate the sculpture in consultation with the City of Mercer Island. 80th Avenue SE would continue to have a 14-foot-wide trail. The trail connection from the I-90 lid to 80th Avenue SE would be temporarily closed during construction, but users could access N Mercer Way from adjacent streets. Following construction, Sound Transit would reconnect the trail along 80th Avenue SE with the trails in the park and restore disturbed landscaping and the pedestrian connections. The open space would continue to provide a transportation connection with the trail linking the north and south sides of I-90 and to the new light rail station, as well as a visual connection through the use of landscaping.

4.7.3 Comparison to the Final EIS

The FEIS Configuration would impact 0.1 acre of Aubrey Davis Park for the station's entrances on 77th and 80th Avenues SE. The Final EIS also evaluated a design option that would locate a station entrance at the Outdoor Sculpture Gallery instead of at 80th Avenue SE, which would impact an additional 0.3 acre of Aubrey Davis Park. The 80th Avenue SE Configuration would result in 0.7 acre of impact, an increase of 0.6 acre from the FEIS Configuration or an increase of 0.3 acre for the FEIS Configuration with the design option. However, the change in park impacts for both Transit Integration configurations are within the overall range of permanent park impacts in the Final EIS and subsequent Addenda.

4.8 Historic and Archaeological Resources

FTA has revised the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Transit Integration configurations in consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). Further, FTA, in consultation with DAHP, determined that there are no additional designated or eligible state or local historic resources within the revised APE. For both configurations, the likelihood for discovering cultural resources is low.

4.8.1 77th Avenue Configuration

The two single-family residences displaced by the 77th Avenue Configuration and two of the adjacent single-family residences are over 50 years old. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Sound Transit and FTA evaluated all four properties to determine their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). FTA determined that none of the properties are eligible for the NRHP, and DAHP concurred in a letter dated December 5, 2016 (Appendix F, Section 106).

4.8.2 80th Avenue SE Configuration

The 80th Avenue SE Configuration would not directly or indirectly affect any historic resources or result in changes from the findings in the Final EIS. Sound Transit and FTA evaluated one property to determine its eligibility for listing on the NRHP because of the revision to the APE. FTA determined the property is not eligible to the NRHP, and DAHP concurred in a letter dated December 5, 2016 (see Appendix F, Section 106).

4.8.3 Comparison to the Final EIS

The Transit Integration configurations would not result in impacts outside of the range of impacts identified in the Final EIS. Neither configuration affects NRHP-eligible properties, and the likelihood for discovering cultural resources is low. During construction, Sound Transit would comply with the project's Archaeological Resources Monitoring Plan and the Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

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5.0 Cumulative Impacts

The Final EIS considered reasonably foreseeable future projects in analyzing potential cumulative impacts of the East Link Extension. The past and present developments have resulted in an urban environment in the I-90 corridor and Mercer Island Station area. There are three new projects on Mercer Island since the Final EIS that could contribute to cumulative impacts. These are the City of Mercer Island's Town Center Visioning Process, the Mercer Island Center for the Arts, and the King County Wastewater North Mercer Island/Enatai Sewer Upgrade. The Town Center Visioning Process, adopted in June 2016, updated the development code for the Town Center. The updated code addresses changes in building heights and design, public spaces, uses, and parking, but does not change planned densities. The Mercer Island Center for the Arts is a new performing arts center that would be located in the southern portion of Town Center about 0.5 mile south of I-90. The sewer upgrade would install a sewer pipeline along a portion of N Mercer Way and would be constructed during the same time as the East Link Extension. The Town Center Visioning Process would primarily affect land use, and the Mercer Island Center for the Arts and the sewer upgrade could primarily affect transportation either during operations or construction.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts on the environment result "from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and other reasonably foreseeable actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time. "
--40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.7

Mercer Island's plan for increased-density mixed-use development in the Town Center does not change as a result of the implementation of the Town Center Visioning process, and the East Link Extension remains consistent with local planning documents, including the PSRC 2035 Land Use Targets. Transit-oriented development is anticipated consistent with what was considered in the Final EIS for the FEIS Configuration. Similar to cumulative impacts discussed in the Final EIS, the East Link project with the Transit Integration configurations would help achieve the goals of regional and City plans, including those identified in the Mercer Island Town Center Visioning Process.

The Mercer Island Center for the Arts would attract additional traffic from Mercer Island and the Puget Sound region during events, but is not anticipated to cause cumulative traffic impacts. East Link construction could contribute to cumulative traffic delays on arterial streets if it is constructed during the same time period as the Center for the Arts. However, the Center for the Arts project and East Link construction would not be in close proximity, and cumulative impacts would be minimal. If the projects are constructed concurrently, Sound Transit would coordinate with the City of Mercer Island to minimize construction-related cumulative impacts, consistent with the Final EIS. No cumulative impacts are anticipated during operation, because most events at the Center for the Arts would likely be outside of peak travel periods. These two projects are not expected to result in any cumulative impacts not identified in the Final EIS.

The North Mercer Island/Enatai Sewer Upgrade will replace an existing sewer line that is primarily offshore with one along N Mercer Way from 80th Avenue SE to the eastern edge of Mercer Island.

West of 80th Avenue SE, it will be located on residential streets that are north of N Mercer Way. The pipeline along N Mercer Way will primarily be under the I-90 Trail, except for approximately 500 feet where it will be under N Mercer Way. While construction of the sewer upgrade is expected to occur between 2019 and 2022, the areas where N Mercer Way would be disrupted are east of where travel patterns would change with the I-90 options and therefore are not expected to have a cumulative effect on travel times during construction. Work on N Mercer Way for the sewer upgrade could require detours if a road closure is required, and Sound Transit would coordinate with King County Wastewater on any road closures in the area needed for construction of the Transit Integration configuration that is selected. Coordination of any closures of the I-90 Trail for the Transit Integration configuration would also be coordinated with the closure of the trail for the sewer upgrade to minimize impacts to non-motorized users.

6.0 Community and Agency Outreach

Throughout the project development, environmental review, final design, and permitting processes, Sound Transit has engaged and sought input from the communities in Seattle, Mercer Island, and Bellevue. Sound Transit coordinated with the cities of Seattle (Judkins Park Station) and Mercer Island on the Mercer Island Bus Transit Integration configurations (Table 6-1). Identification of the Transit Integration configuration to be implemented would be coordinated with WSDOT, King County Metro, and Mercer Island. Sound Transit staff have also shared information with the Mercer Island City Council, Mercer Island Design Commission, Mercer Island Arts Council, Mercer Island Advisory Group, Mercer Island Rotary, Seattle City Council, Seattle Light Rail Review Panel, and Seattle neighborhood groups regarding the Mercer Island Bus Transit Integration configurations.

Table 6-1. Community Outreach Activities for Mercer Island Transit Integration

Month	Year	Event	Attendees (approximate)
July	2014	Final Design Open House: Mercer Island 60% Design	70
August	2014	Transit Integration Open House	80
November	2014	Mercer Island Parking and Integrated Transit Neighborhood Meeting	25
November	2014	Mercer Island Parking and Integrated Transit Open House	100
September	2015	Mercer Island Listening Tour	250

In late 2015, Sound Transit, the City of Mercer Island, King County Metro and WSDOT held a public meeting and a series of drop-in sessions focused on gathering community input about transportation on and off the island. Approximately 300 people attended the four different events and nearly 200 comments were submitted throughout the process. From these meetings, community members identified that securing access to the new R-8A HOV lanes for Mercer Island’s SOVs was a high priority.

Because of FHWA’s August 2016 letter that stated “that USDOT does not possess legal authority to grant either a temporary or permanent waiver to permit SOV access to HOV lanes,” WSDOT, City of Mercer Island, Sound Transit and FHWA staff have met regularly on use of the HOV lanes since August 2016 to investigate alternatives for I-90 access to and from Mercer Island. As part of that effort, Sound Transit and WSDOT provided preliminary traffic analysis results to City staff in November and December 2016 and January 2017.

Beginning fall of 2016, the City has sponsored open houses and community meetings along with several presentations to various community and civic groups. I-90 issues, from mobility, construction of East Link, and securing use of the new R-8A HOV lanes have also been discussed at several city council meetings. The City continually keeps the community informed by having a dedicated website page that provides information about I-90 issues.

Prohibition of Mercer Island SOVs from the I-90 HOV ramps and lanes has resulted and will likely continue to result in public controversy. This Addendum has been posted on Sound Transit’s website, and notice of its availability has been sent to the public, agencies, tribes, and interested organizations and persons.

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7.0 Environmental Justice

The Final EIS concluded that the project would not result in any disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations; project impacts will for the most part be either limited in scope or mitigated through implementation of effective mitigation measures. The project will also provide substantial benefits positively affecting minority and low-income populations. The East Link Extension will result in benefits to these populations along the I-90 corridor, such as improved access to transit and employment, improved transit reliability, and increased mobility along the corridor and other regional centers. This Addendum concludes that impacts from the I-90 Operations changed conditions and the Transit Integration configurations would be within the range of impacts and alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS and can be mitigated. They will not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts from those disclosed in the Final EIS, and no new significant adverse environmental impacts are likely. Therefore, there are no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations.

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8.0 Conclusions

The impacts resulting from the option that prohibits SOVs from using the R-8A HOV lanes between Seattle and Mercer Island (Option 2) or the option that converts the R-8A HOV lanes to general purpose lanes (Option 3; construction only) are of similar magnitude to the alternatives evaluated and impacts identified in the 2011 Final EIS. This is also true for the 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE Transit Integration configurations. Impacts from the I-90 options and Transit Integration configurations are within the range of impacts and alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS and subsequent Addenda, and can be mitigated. The I-90 options and Transit Integration configurations would not alter the analysis or conclusions of significant impacts evaluated in the 2011 Final EIS. No new probable significant adverse environmental impacts would arise and a supplemental EIS is not warranted.

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